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Letter dated 21 June 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request that the attached press release, issued on 20 June 1996 by His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, head of the Cuban delegation to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), concerning the investigation of the violations of Cuban territorial airspace, be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 140, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Bruno RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

[Original: English]

Press release issued on 20 June 1996 at New York by the head of the delegation of Cuba to the International Civil Aviation Organization

ICAO investigation of the violations of Cuban territorial airspace

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) team investigating the downing over Cuban territorial waters of two pirate aircraft that violated Cuban airspace on 24 February last expressed their intention of convening a so-called "technical meeting" with the participation of delegations of Cuba and the United States of America.

Said meeting, foreseen for two days, 20 and 21 June 1996, only lasted for 20 minutes, as it became obvious that it only had a formal nature and that it would not carry out an in-depth consideration of the report of the investigating team with the aim of modifying it as necessary.

The Cuban delegation, headed by Mr. Ricardo Alarcón, Speaker of the Cuban Parliament, considered that a meeting of such nature would not fulfil any useful purpose and should not take place, particularly when the report will be distributed today to members of the ICAO Council.

Mr. Alarcón made it crystal clear that Cuba would express its views in the ICAO Council itself and everywhere it considered appropriate.

Such a "technical meeting" can only be conceived as part and parcel of a manoeuvre geared to attempting to legitimize a one-sided report and give the impression that justice is being served by a procedure which, after more than three months of investigation, would attempt to compel members of the ICAO Council to express themselves only four days after having received the report, three of which are holidays.

In addition to having the effect of leaving in doubt the seriousness of the process, these "technical meetings" were also geared to giving the impression that the report had been exhaustively discussed, considered and even negotiated, when it cannot, as was expressed at the beginning of the meeting, be substantially changed and is being distributed even today to the ICAO Council members.

Cuba has totally rejected this approach.